

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, August 8, 2021

The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Apostolic Reading: Romans 15:1-7

Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35
(Jesus Heals Two Blind and
One Mute in Capernaum)

Tone 6 • Resurrection Gospel 7

➔ **For Live Streaming Link, [click here](#)**

[\(Click here for a PDF version of this week's news\)](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE DORMITION FAST — in preparation for the Feast of the Falling-Asleep of the Theotokos — continues up to Sunday, August 15th. **GREAT VESPERS** for the Feast will be celebrated on **Saturday August 14th** at our sister Parish of [St. Mary's Assumption](#) on Salisbury Street starting at 6:00 pm.

THE CDC HAS REVISED ITS MASKING GUIDELINES due to the increase in infections because of the highly contagious Delta variant. It recommends that **people vaccinated against the coronavirus resume wearing masks** in public indoor spaces and schools where the virus is surging, and that **unvaccinated persons seek a vaccine** as soon as possible. Following this recommendation, we are now asking that all persons attending the Divine Services wear masks until the numbers are more favorable.

WE WILL BE PROVIDING A MUSTARD SEED MEAL on **Friday, August 20th**. The team preparing the meal will gather at the Church at 1:00 pm. **We wish to thank Joanne Prizio for underwriting the cost of the meal. May God bless her and her family!** If you'd like to help with preparing the meal please contact **Deb Sedares** by [e-mail](#) or phone 508-509-6678.

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold its regular monthly meeting Thursday, August 19th at 7:00 pm. Parish Council Members, please let [Chris Seith](#) know if you are unable to attend.

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS who worked the Pantry this past Saturday, August 7th. Our next date is **Saturday, September 4th**. If you'd like to share a small part of yourself in this worthwhile ministry, please e-mail Nicole Apostola at nicole.apostola@gmail.com. She can give you more details.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

HOLY TRINITY HAS RECEIVED A DEFICIENCY-FREE SURVEY result from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). The deficiency-free rating is one of the top indicators of excellence for nursing and rehabilitation facilities. The state surveyed Holy Trinity this past week as part of a regular annual review for compliance with nursing care standards. They evaluated our facility for quality, safety, administration effectiveness, cleanliness, nursing care, activity programs, protection of resident rights, and food services. **Congratulations to our staff who work tirelessly every day to serve our residents with the highest level of care, safety, quality, and comfort.**

NEW ADMISSIONS. See for yourself what makes Holy Trinity a top choice for both long-term care and short-term rehab. To inquire about admissions or to schedule a tour, please call (508) 852-1000.

VOLUNTEERS. Do you have a passion for helping others? Can you share a talent, such as knitting, baking, or playing the piano? Those who are fully vaccinated may be considered as volunteers. Please call **Donna Benard**, with the Activities department, at 508-852-1000, or [e-mail her](#) to discuss one of the many ways you may lend a helping hand. We are especially excited to invite back our church groups who may be interested in hosting a luncheon, coffee social, or assisting with liturgy.

REHABILITATION. Getting You Home – Better, Faster, Stronger. We offer outstanding services in our extraordinary, Medicare-certified center, including physical, occupational, and speech therapies. For nearly a quarter century, we've been helping patients restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain and prevent or limit physical disabilities from injuries or disease. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact our Director of Rehab, [Heather Walsh](#).

JOB OPENINGS. We have openings for a **DIRECTOR OF NURSING** and **DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS**, as well as for nurses and CNAs for all shifts, including sign on bonuses and great benefits. [Click here](#) for a full listing with detailed job descriptions. If you have questions, please contact the Human Resources Generalist, [Kimberly Hescocock](#). Recent grads and people familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

DIVINE LITURGY continues in-person for residents on Wednesday mornings. We welcome volunteers and visitors who would like to be involved.

STAY CONNECTED. Be sure to like our [Facebook page](#) for frequent updates and photos. Residents are enjoying the last month of summer with trivia and tea on the patio, balloon volleyball, ice cream day, and making their own homemade bread and jam.

Orthodox Links

[Romanian Orthodox Metropolia](#) of the Americas
[Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America](#) (Assembly of Bishops)
[International Orthodox Christian Charities](#) (IOCC)
[Orthodox Christian Mission Center](#) (OCMC)
[Orthodox Christian Radio Network](#) (OCN)
[Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches of Central Mass.](#) (CEOC)

A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord

O source and origin of the sun and the moon and the stars, of heaven and earth and all that is, O designer and creator of all things, visible and tangible, as well as hidden from our mind and our senses: Your wisdom and love inspire your church to celebrate the feast of the transfiguration of your Son. On Tabor, in a wondrous and unfathomable way, he gave his friends an insight into who he really is. Now, during this feast, we entreat you to open our minds and our hearts to the mystery of his person, that, by ever contemplating his passion, death, and resurrection, we may portray this understanding in our lives and abide in a lasting fellowship with him and with each other.

By the grace and mercies and love for us of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Welcome One Another

This Sunday, the seventh after Pentecost, we conclude reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans. Today's selection — Romans 15:1-7 — are his final words of encouragement to the Roman Christians. There is an epilogue that follows in which he tells them of his future travel plans and his intention to visit Rome, as well as greetings to a number of people whom he knows in Rome, but the verses that we read today close his spiritual and theological advice to them.

In the opening line he uses a rhetorical device to win them over, to open their hearts to listen to what will follow. He tells them, "We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (v. 1). In this one phrase, "we who are strong," he compliments them by both calling them 'strong' and also identifying them with himself.

He tells them that the strong need to 'bear' or 'put up with' the failings of the weak. The one Greek word (βαστάζειν) he uses holds both of these meanings, and each one applies equally as well to the context. The strong 'ought' (this is an ethical imperative) to both endure and carry the failings of weaker brothers and sisters and put aside their own comfort, but with a purpose.

"Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor" (v. 2). Whether we either 'put up with' or 'carry' the weaknesses of our brother or sister, it is toward a specific end: their edification. The Greek word St. Paul uses, 'oikodomen' (οικοδομήν) is similar to the English word 'edify' in the sense that at the root of both is the word 'house' or 'building.' Whatever we do as Christians should also have a social dimension. This phrase resonates with other images that St. Paul uses — as, for example, the Church as Christ's Body (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12ff; Romans 12:4ff) — to explain this

responsibility we have as individual Christians to the whole body. So, when we build up our neighbor, our objective is also to strengthen the whole 'structure' of Christ's Body.

He then directs us to look at our Lord's example: "For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me' (Psalm 69:10)" (v. 3). In one sense, all of St. Paul's argumentation in the Letter have been leading to this point. He offers us the example of Christ, and then invites us to meditate on it, and then follow Him.

In his Letter to the Philippians St. Paul says of Christ that "He emptied Himself" (2:7). But here he wants us to focus not simply on the Incarnation — that He became human for us. Rather, he wants us see the full extent to which He 'bore' our failings. Jesus not only became human, but He was ill-treated, became a person of ill-repute, was seen as someone weak and of no account, all for our sake. In a word: He suffered. His 'not pleasing Himself' meant a real sacrifice on His part. It will require the same from us.

In order that we might not loose heart, St. Paul tells us that our Lord gave us His example in order to strengthen and encourage us. In quoting from Psalm 69, he wants us to understand that Christ's sacrifice is part of God's whole plan for us. "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope" (v. 4).

It is not an easy thing to bear one another's burdens. This is why St. Paul reminds us of what exactly might required of us by offering the example of Christ. Regardless of how 'strong' we might think ourselves, without God's help we will find it impossible to accomplish.

St. Paul directs us to the Scriptures — where the history of God's engagement with humanity is recorded — for instruction and encouragement. By using the tools offered us in the Sacred Writings, our steadfast commitment to follow the Lord will be filled with hope. Without this hope we will find it impossible to take up the kind of life to which God calls not only us, but all of humanity.

He then bestows a blessing on the Roman Christians. "May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (v. 6-7). Many of the blessings that we use in the Services of our Church, especially those offered during the Diving Liturgy, echo this blessing. It asks that God our Father grant us the strength to persevere so that we might be able to live together in peace and harmony.

Harmony is a wonderful word to express the unity of life to which we strive. Those who have sung in a choir or played in an orchestra know that each musician offers their particular note and rhythm. When each one is doing exactly as they are supposed to the outcome is magnificent. The whole becomes much more than the sum of the parts. The result is a peaceful beauty that uplifts. On the other hand, if even one person is 'off key' the result is a sourness that can be like the scratching of nails on a blackboard.

In order to realize this harmony, we must "welcome one another ... just as Christ has welcomed [us], for the glory of God." (v. 7) In last week's reading from Romans we heard St. Paul speak about the virtue of hospitality. What is asked of us here is more than hospitality. It is the opening of our hearts and the offering of ourselves to one another, just as Christ has opened His heart toward us. It is not only the emptying of ourselves, but the filling of ourselves with love for our neighbor, bearing their burdens in order to build them up.

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sun, Aug 1 **Dormition Fast Begins**
Sat, Aug 7 **Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon**
Sat, Aug 14 **Dormition Vespers at St. Mary's 6 pm**
Sun, Aug 15 **Feast of the Dormition**
Thurs, Aug 19 **Parish Council 7 pm**
Fri, Aug 20 **Mustard Seed Meal**
Sat, Sept 4 **Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon**
Sept 4-6 **Marlboro Greek Festival**

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Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am